

EPA-PNL-1782

Hanady
Kader/R10/USEPA/US
03/20/2012 02:40 PM

To Richard Parkin, Phil North, Judy Smith, Sheila Eckman, Cara Steiner-Riley, Palmer Hough, Marianne Holsman, Bill Dunbar, Kate Kelly, Jeff Philip, Jeff Frithsen, Dianne Soderlund

cc

bcc

Subject Juneau Empire: Native corps. bicker over Pebble Mine at meeting

<http://juneauempire.com/state/2012-03-19/native-corps-bicker-over-pebble-mine-meeting>

Native corps. bicker over Pebble Mine at meeting

Posted: March 19, 2012 - 11:06pm | **Updated:** March 20, 2012 - 12:02am

By [Pat Forgey](#)

JUNEAU EMPIRE

The Bristol Bay Native Corp. came to Juneau, bringing with them pickled and kippered salmon and a message from its shareholders.

They don't like the Pebble Mine, and fear it may threaten the salmon on which Bristol Bay is dependent.

"We can support renewable and non-renewable development, but there's one particular project that we don't support because of the risks it represents to the region," said Jason Metrokin, BBNC's president and chief executive officer.

Speaking at the Capitol at an informal meeting that attracted most of the Senate's top leader, including President Gary Stevens, R-Kodiak, both the Majority and Minority leaders, Finance Committee co-chairmen and others, Metrokin said surveys of both his corporation's shareholders and the general Alaska public showed they were supportive of most development almost everywhere in Alaska.

But neither the state nor Bristol Bay residents support Pebble, he said.

Alaskans support oil, mining, tourism and other industries of various types around Alaska, but 54 percent oppose Pebble, he said.

"The majority of registered voters in our state are opposed this particular project, while at the same time they support other development around the state," he said.

Same with BBNC shareholders, where opposition to Pebble is strong and has been building, Metrokin said.

A survey last year showed 81 percent opposition, leading the corporation to act, he said. A similar survey in 2007 showed 69 percent opposition, he said.

“We need to balance the benefit versus the risk,” he said, and the risk of Pebble appeared too high.

The corporation supports other mining operations, including small local ones in the area and ones as large as Juneau’s Greens Creek Mine, where BBNC was an early investor.

“We recognize Greens Creek, not far from Juneau here, as a good example of responsible development we do receive revenue from,” he said.

So far Greens Creek royalties have provided about \$4 million back to BBNC, he said.

The corporation itself isn’t involved in fishing, but is representing the views of its shareholders which are interested in commercial and subsistence fisheries worth hundreds of millions of dollars a year, Metrokin said.

“We feel that the negative impact of this particular project, Pebble, will adversely impact the fishery,” he said.

A Pebble advocate in the packed hearing room said that only 15 percent of Bristol Bay permits are local, however.

Coming to Juneau to confront the BBNC delegation were some local Iliamna residents who support the mine.

Lisa Reimers of the Iliamna Village Native Corp., which has a different view than the regional corporation, questioned how much the corporation’s ongoing advertising campaign was costing.

About \$1 million, Metrokin said, which is something a \$2 billion corporation needs to do, he said.

“You need to represent yourself, otherwise other folks are going to misrepresent your message,” he said.

Reimers said it would be better to spend that money promoting economic development in the region.

Martha Anelon, a Pebble employee from Iliamna, said the village had no representation on the regional corporation’s board.

“We are outvoted by you guys who are 150 miles away,” she said.

- Contact reporter Pat Forgey at 523-2250 or at patrick.forgey@juneauempire.com.

~~~~~

Hanady Aisha Kader  
Public Affairs Specialist  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10  
206.553.0454 (desk) 206.225.8127 (cell)  
kader.hanady@epa.gov